

A Celebration of 50 Years of Progress in Biological Standardization and Control at WHO

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Fifty years of progress in biological standardization and control at the World Health Organization were celebrated at a meeting in Geneva in October 1998. The meeting was opened with an address given by the Director-General Dr. D.G. Brundtland and was followed by a short talk by Dr. Charles Mérieux, who has been such an important figure in biological standardization.

The first session, which was devoted mainly to historical aspects such as the eradication of smallpox and the standardization of insulin and antitoxins, also looked to the future with the prospect of the eradication of poliomyelitis. The need for standardization in endocrinology, plasma products, transfusion medicine and cell substrates was also emphasised. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to current problems and the need to provide methods which will allow products to be standardized without the use of animals. Several talks were given on methods which are based on the molecular revolution which has taken place during the past 50 years. The importance of standardization has increased in recent years with the public's expectation of zero-risk. Consequently the role of the IABS assumes an ever-increasing importance.

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